



Area **59**

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
GENERAL SERVICE ASSEMBLY
www.area59aa.org

AREA 59: How It Worked

Rarely Did We See It Fall

On **February 13th 1940**: Having been dry in the original New York group for about two years, Jim B. (whose story "The Vicious Cycle" can be found in the second, third, and fourth editions of the Big Book) came to Philadelphia for a new job. In a letter he sent to Clarence and Dottie S., dated **March 7, 1940** he wrote "Have started an AA Group here and last week had 3 at the meeting and this week we have 7 alkys." Thus began Alcoholics Anonymous in Eastern Pennsylvania.

In **August of 1940** Roger B. from Philadelphia tried with no success to bring the AA message to Harrisburg. On **March 3, 1941** he was transferred by his company to Harrisburg and on **June 18, 1941** along with five other recovering alcoholics, he started a meeting at his sister's home in North Harrisburg. On **August 16, 1941**, the meeting had to move, due to its' growth to nine members.

Alcoholics Anonymous was brought to the Reading area in **1943** by George L., who had gotten sober in Philadelphia. Two men from Pottstown became members of the group, and in **1946** started a group in Pottstown.

In **October of 1943**, an artist named Horace H., tired of the 80+ mile journey from his home in Williamsport to the weekly meeting in Harrisburg, started a meeting with several other men in his home. The Williamsport Group was founded and continues to this day.

In **June of 1945**, Yvelin G., a Navy lieutenant, was transferred from Philadelphia to Allentown, and brought the message to the Lehigh Valley. Over the next few years it spread from Allentown to Bethlehem to Easton; north and south.

On **June 10, 1946**, George L. came to Scranton from Philadelphia. Feeling that there was a great need for a group there, the Scranton Group held its' first meeting on **August 13, 1946**. They relocated a number of times – once because their meeting site was above a bar, and newcomers made the bar, instead of the meeting. In **1948**, five members, weary of traveling, formed a group in Clarks Summit.

Also in **1946**:

Marshall J. started a group in Stroudsburg; Pottstown and Morrisville, in Lower Bucks County began; Philadelphia expanded. In December, the first meeting of AA was held in Wilkes-Barre, with a total of 5 members.

In **1947**, in the western most portion of **AREA 59**, saw the formation of a group in Philipsburg. Harold F. and Bill H., who had been attending meetings in Altoona and Pittsburgh, founded that group. In **1948**, Arthur R. and "Shorty" Z. founded the Bellefonte meeting. In **1949**, the Clearfield group was started by members who used to attend the Philipsburg meeting.

In the extreme southwestern part of **AREA 59**, the Chambersburg Group made the front page of the local newspaper the day after its' first meeting. The group first met on Sunday afternoon **July 27, 1947**. On Monday **July 28**, the Public Opinion published an article titled "Drink Problem To Be Combated By Local Group." Subtitled; "Local unit of Alcoholics Anonymous effected yesterday."

From these beginnings we grew. In **1951**, the structure of Pennsylvania AA took place at the First AA General Service Conference. In **1956**, Pennsylvania was divided into 12 areas. In **1977**, the 12 areas became known as "districts".

As of **June 2010**, **AREA 59** is comprised of **48** districts, with **1564** groups registered, and an approximate membership of **32,161**.

The AREA 59 Website: www.area59aa.org